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The massacre of Timorese civilians by Indonesian troops, one year ago, in the Santa Cruz cemetery, in Dili, represents a turning-point in the evolution of the East-Timor question.

Its occurrence has lent support to denunciations by Portugal, as well as other countries and international organizations regarding the untenable situation in the illegally occupied territory, and has contributed to descredit the Indonesian government attempts to view those denunciations as groundless.

After more than one decade of silence and isolationism, the plight of unrelenting repression besetting the Timorese people was finally shown to the world in its rawest expression. The history of the East Timor occupation which has claimed thousands of victims did neither frighten nor prevent the Timorese people, namely the younger generations, from demonstrating in behalf of their fundamental rights and liberties. Time did not consolidate into acceptance the Timorese people's situation, but rather reinforced their determination. In a unprecedented way, Santa Cruz may be viewed as shaking up the international community. It heightened its awareness of the continuing plight of a small people, invaded and subjugated by force, in an intolerable act of violation of all the principles of human dignity universally accepted, as the century draws to an end.

Tragic it was though the sacrifice of so many Timorese youths, it was not in vain. It awoke the sleeping conscience of the world, revealing the naked truth of the discrepancies and hypocrisies. It created conditions for the development of a series of political and diplomatic efforts which undubitably gave East Timor a more prominent profile.

The new position of the EC on the subject, the suspension of American military assistance to Indonesia, the deliberations within the framework of the U.N. Human Rights Commission, the resolutions

adopted by several international organizations and the solidarity movements emerging in several countries have given momentum to this question in the world public opinion. It shows that the East Timor situation is finally being understood in a perspective that favors the respect for the fundamental rights of the Timorese people, which in real terms calls for an effective action.

Unfortunately, it must also be acknowledged that this increasing awareness of the international community concerning the gravity of the East Timor question did not have a substantial impact in the prevailing situation in the territory:

The grotesque contrast between the symbolic sentences given to the perpetrators of the Santa Cruz massacre and the heavy sentences, including a life term, imposed on the civilian survivors not charged with violent acts; the refusals of access to the territory to human rights organizations, whose requests for entry have elicited outrageous comments from a so-called governor "that it would have been desirable the killing of all the protesters"; and the recent reports about a recent wave of imprisonments, all have demonstrated that there is not on the part of Indonesia any intention to put an end to the human rights violations that afflict the East Timorese people.

The Portuguese government once again calls the attention of the international community to this lingering situation which is a challenge to the values and principles of human dignity and sovereingty universally accepted.

It is necessary to prevent any recurrence of the violence perpetrated one year ago in Dili, which is rooted in the abrogation of those rights. Recent history has shown that illegitimate and repressive situations do not sustain the test of time.

Therefore it is imperative to find a negotiated and peaceful solution which allows for the implementation of the decolonization process in the East Timor territory, in full observance of its cultural and religious identity and the legitimate rights of its people. This includes the freedom of choice of its political destiny, in accordance with the United Nations charter and the resolutions adopted by the Assembly General and by the Security Council on this question.